



Improving the Updating Process of Current Care Guidelines

Honkanen Mari, Sipilä Raija, Komulainen Jorma, Ketola Eeva
Current Care, the Finnish Medical Society Duodecim
Finland

mari.honkanen@duodecim.fi

Background

Evidence needs to be up to date in a clinical practice guideline to ensure its usability. Current Care (CC) has had a structured updating process on a three year basis. Updating a guideline, however, remains a challenge for voluntary based working groups (WG's).

Purpose

The aim was to specify the key-elements of successful update and to recognize the needs for further development of the updating process.

Methods

Web-based, structured feedback has been collected from the WG's since 2005. The feedback survey consists of both multiple choice and open-ended questions.

During the five year period the survey has been sent to total of 767 WG members. The response rate varied from 37.7 to 49.7%. Feedback is annually categorized and analyzed to evaluate and enhance the updating process.

Results

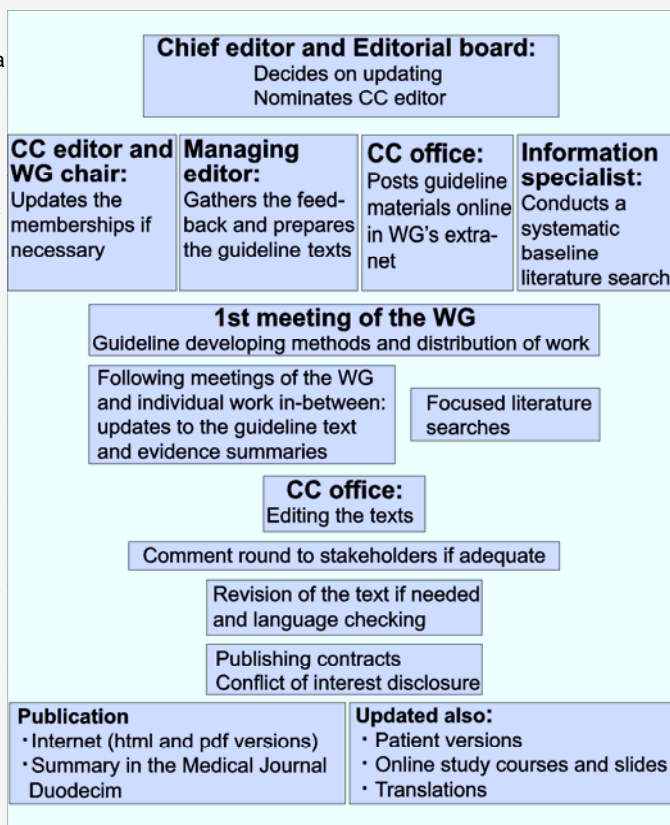
Feedback of the updating process has mainly been positive. The WG members find the work inspiring and educational. The main challenge is updating all the guideline material (Table I). Updating has been experienced time consuming and laborious.

According to the feedback the editorial board increased its role in the updating process to lessen the load of voluntary experts; managing editor makes suggestions how to improve the usability of the guideline. The flexibility of timing has been increased and need for a guideline update is dependent on new evidence. The current process is illustrated in Figure 1.

Discussion

Changes have been made to the updating process after receiving feedback. The work load of the voluntary WG members should be reduced and a reward system, both financial and academic, should be created. The process, timing and thoroughness, should be more flexible depending on new evidence in the guideline field.

Figure 1. Updating process of Current Care.



CC = Current Care
WG = working group

Table I. Challenges of updating a guideline.

Work load is not equally divided between WG members
Long-lasting and heavy process while working full time
No financial compensation
Amount of literature to go through
Writing new and updating evidence summaries
Difficult to keep up with the schedule and arrange meetings where all members can participate

